**Minutes of the**

**Meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches**

**Video Conference, 8 February 2022**

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## 1. Welcome and Prayer

Dr Agnes Abuom (Anglican Church of Kenya), moderator, welcomed the members to the executive committee meeting on behalf of the leadership of the central committee (LCC). The agenda of this meeting was to prepare for the central committee meeting, which would take place 9-15 February 2022.

Rev. Karin van den Broeke (Protestant Church in the Netherlands) spoke about the love of Christ, linking the two assembly themes of Busan and Karlsruhe. She offered prayer to begin the meeting in the form of the song "Until All Are Fed".

## 2. Opening Actions

Dr Abuom thanked her and asked Mr Douglas Chial, director in the office of the general secretariat, to briefly introduce the agenda of the executive committee meeting as well as the conduct for meeting.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

## 3. Opening Remarks

Dr Abuom moderated a hearing session.

### 3.1 Moderator of the Central Committee

Reflecting on the journey together from Busan the moderator described the journey as a very unique moment in the life of the WCC and in her own life. Because of challenges, especially the pandemic, there were times when we were not sure we would complete the journey.

She thanked God that God's love had kept us together as a committee and that God's love had sustained us. Together as a team the executive committee had weathered the storm, by the grace of God. Technology and new forms of communication had enabled us to sustain the fellowship and carry out the necessary tasks.

She said that as weak vessels but vessels that had given themselves to the service of God, we were still committed to move together – for justice and peace, for reconciliation and unity.

### 3.2 Acting General Secretary

Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Saucat, acting general secretary, started by saying that the second online meeting of the central committee would begin the following day. The decision in January to meet online had been wise. The situation was improving, but the peak of the current wave of infections had not yet come. He expressed his gratitude to the leadership of the central committee for their dedication and direction in the preparations.

He stated that it was important for the executive committee to address:

- Being prepared together
- Reviewing the draft unity statement

- Reviewing assembly business and plenary nominations
- Sharing a brief update on Green Village and WCC finances.

Being prepared together began with reviewing the central committee agenda together. If the executive committee members were all on the "same page", this would help the central committee to achieve its agenda in a spirit of consensus.

The executive committee had not had a chance to see the draft unity statement. Normally a draft unity statement was reviewed by the central committee and the suggestions helped inform further work. The executive needed to consider how best to bring this forward to the central committee.

In terms of reviewing assembly business and plenary nominations, the documents included proposals from the leadership of the central committee for assembly business leadership and the consensus facilitation. Also included on the agenda were proposals for ecumenical conversation leadership and suggestions for thematic plenary speakers. Again, the committee needed to consider how best to bring these forward to the central committee.

On the Green Village and finances, the committee was aware that WCC accepted a period of exclusivity with a potential investor in the Kyoto building and property. The investor visited in January and a binding offer was expected at the end of February or early March. He felt optimistic about this investor.

He reported that the preliminary financial closing for 2021 showed a net increase of ca. CHF 1 million and membership contributions generously given were not applied in full and could be allocated to the assembly fund as the executive recommended in November.

Fr Ioan concluded by saying he was grateful for the committee's efforts to prepare and lead the central committee meeting this week.

## 4. Central Committee Proposed Annotated Agenda

Dr Abuom opened the floor for comments on the central committee agenda.

Ms Emily Jane Evans (Uniting Church in Australia) noted that although the intention was to have the leadership of the central committee present in Geneva for the central committee, this would not be the case. She asked how the leadership team had decided to manage the challenges of that situation.

Dr Abuom said that it was unfortunate that the LCC could not be in Geneva for the meeting. The LCC felt confident in that key staff, with the acting general secretary, would be together at the ecumenical centre. The LCC had agreed to consult among themselves in between the sessions, particularly on critical matters. The LCC would do more online consultation, with the facilitation of the staff, and the staff would sit together as a team. In case of challenges the staff could revert back to the LCC and we would be able to get back to them on any matter of concern. In terms of the agenda, there would be the usual division of labour and this meant

that whoever was leading a particular matter in the agenda would consult with the appropriate staff.

Bishop Mary Ann Swenson (United Methodist Church) affirmed this process and said that the LCC was able to preside online. She said she counted on the assistance of the staff to see the hands raised and help read the room as consensus is built. The conduct of meetings for online meetings would be followed.

H.E. Metropolitan Serafim Kykotis (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa) asked what the LCC would communicate to the central committee about the process of the election of a new general secretary. He assured the LCC of the executive's support but felt it would be helpful for the executive committee to be informed of the LCC's intention. Dr Abuom said that the LCC would offer a word on the process to the central committee. This would be shared with the executive committee before the central committee meeting.

Mr Chial briefly introduced the central committee framework agenda. The meeting began with two days of hearing sessions (Wednesday and Thursday). The regional meetings would take place outside the basic framework agenda so as to meet at times which were more convenient for each region. The standing committees would meet on the next two days (Friday and Saturday), united by using a common prayer resource in each committee. On Sunday there was time for rest and worship in local congregations. On the last two days (Monday and Tuesday) time was allocated in plenary for hearing back from the regional meetings and decisions sessions. This followed the model of the first online meeting of the central committee, held in June 2021.

Ms Anne Glynn-Mackoul (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East) asked about managing the possible situation where there would be many blue cards and the body might need to move to a vote. Dr Abuom responded that the LCC had worked with the understanding that the moderators wanted to create an atmosphere which was positive, even while critical voices were expected in the discussions. The LCC would draw on the experience of the executive committee members, as well as the consensus consultant. She recognized that there were additional challenges for online meetings as consulting with each other took more time than simply turning to your neighbour in the meeting room. The LCC had already agreed on moderation of the different session, sharing many of them. They would also monitor those sessions which might include discussions on more contentious issues. She welcomed further advice from the members.

Ms Glynn-Mackoul said that it would be helpful to identify those matters on which a decision was needed immediately and those for which more time could be taken or where a decision could be made outside the meeting, e.g. in an electronic discussion portal.

Dr Abuom thanked her for this important observation. She counted on the executive to be in touch with the LCC as the meeting went on to make the leadership aware of potential challenges.

In the case of difficult discussions Ms Evans suggested that Zoom had the technical capacity to break the group into smaller groups for more in-depth discussion. If the groups could report back, then this could assist in hearing the views of more members.

Bishop Swenson felt that the first day would be straight forward. There might be some challenges in the second day with the discussion of the draft unity statement and the update on the process of the election of a general secretary. She pointed to the last two days when the committee met in decision session and said that the leadership had to be properly prepared for the discussions of the recommendations of the standing committees.

Dr Abuom thanked the group for the discussion and the helpful suggestions.

The agenda of the central committee was approved by consensus.

## 5. Draft Unity Statement (GEN PRC 03)

Prof. Dr Marina Kolovopoulou (Church of Greece), moderator of the drafting group, was invited to present the draft unity statement.

Dr Kolovopoulou greeted the committee. She was happy to share the drafting group's ideas for the unity statement for the assembly. The World Council of Churches in its ministerial role (apart from its theological task) was called to serve the churches to the best of its ability as an instrument facilitating their commitment to cooperate on various practical levels. This cooperation not only includes help to cover crucial situations around the world but, also an initiative in common advocacy of member churches in regard to questions of freedom and justice, social problems, oppression, etc.. This common work was based on the mandate of our Christian solidarity, to love our neighbours and to consider them as members of the one body of the human race which we all shared. This also stemmed from the coming assembly theme "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity".

On a second level, our experience of the last two years, due to the pandemic, and its impacts worldwide, made clear how our world has been deeply shattered, wounded and divided due to multiple choices, mostly political in character, that drove humanity to the loss of hope to the faint of love, to despair and finally to reveal our weakness of faith in God. These thoughts framed the work of the draft unity statement which had a more pastoral character and spiritual aspect as a response to the current wounds of humanity, breaking onto the surface the support of human dignity and life and the necessity of mutual solidarity in Christ. In this respect, the draft unity statement as such, had a different approach aiming to provide an opportunity for further reflection as Christians. On the other hand it consisted of a stimulus for the WCC's theological work concerning the theological evaluation of the meaning of unity that demands deeper understanding and explication of the apostolic faith as expressed in the Nicean-Constantinopolitan Creed.

The present text consisted of 16 paragraphs, following almost the same kind of structure as previous WCC unity statements. The group had focused upon the very important meaning of love to different settings and levels of our human life condition. The group tried to bring the

whole feeling of love, faith and love, but mostly the importance of love, as it was something which came for a first time into such a central position for the WCC.

She concluded by thanking the staff for the facilitation of the work and Rev. Dr Susan Durber, who worked very hard to bring the many ideas of the group together into a coherent draft. She welcomed feedback from the executive committee to the statement.

Dr Abuom noted that this draft unity statement was coming to the executive committee for the first time. It was the considered opinion of the LCC that the statement should not be presented to the central committee without going to the executive committee first.

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste (Romanian Orthodox Church) expressed his difficulty in reacting now as not all the members had had the chance to read the text carefully. He said that having a statement on unity was essential for both the central committee and the assembly. He hoped it would be an inspiring and mobilizing text for the ecumenical movement.

Ms Glynn-Mackoul asked who served the drafting committee. The following members comprised the group:

- Prof. Dr Marina Kolovopoulos, moderator (University of Athens, School of Theology , Church of Greece)
- Rev. James Bhagwan (Pacific Conference of Churches, Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma)
- Dr Claudio Carvalhaes (Union Theological Seminary, Igreja Presbiteriana Independente do Brasil)
- Prof. Christophe Chalamet (Faculté de théologie de l'Université de Genève)
- Prof Cheng Yang-en (Taiwan Theological College and Seminary, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan)
- Dr Susan Durber (United Reformed Church)
- Dr Verena Hammes (Roman Catholic Church, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland)
- Dr Kenneth Mtata (Zimbabwe Council of Churches, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe)
- H.G. Bishop Gevork Saroyan (Armenian Apostolic Church [Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin])
- Very Rev. Vladimir SHMALII (SS. Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute, Russian Orthodox Church [Moscow Patriarchate])
- Rev. Dr Liz Vuadi VIBILA (Université Protestante au Congo, Église du Christ au Congo - Communauté presbytérienne)
- Rev. Dr Ge WEN (Nanjing Union Theological Seminary China Christian Council)

Dr Kolovopoulou added that the staff involved were Rev. Dr Prof. Odair Pedroso Mateus and Dr Ani Ghazaryan-Drissi.

H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima (Ecumenical Patriarchate) expressed great thanks to the group as it was a difficult job to draft such a statement. He had the privilege to participate in the drafting for all the unity statements since the first one on ecclesiology was

launched by H.H. Catholicos Aram I. He said that this was not just a statement on unity but that the text spoke to many other things, e.g. love, reconciliation. Unlike in the past, this statement was not particularly focused on unity. He expressed apprehension about the reception of the statement by the central committee. Though the group had done an excellent job, he suggested that the text needed more revision to really be a statement on unity, following the input from the executive and central committee meetings.
Fr Ioan would prefer to avoid a difficult discussion at the central committee, if the executive did not think that the statement was ready to present to the central committee.

Dr Kolovopoulou said that the comments of H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios had also come up in the drafting group itself. The group had thought, on occasion, that it could be helped in its process with a few more members. The task was also challenging in that not all the members could be present for each meeting. The Orthodox members of the drafting group, due to a variety of circumstances, were not so consistent in their participation. All the members worked hard and offered the best they could. She felt that the proposal to enrich the group with a few more members was a good one and that the group would welcome the suggestion.

Ms Glynn-Mackoul thanked the moderator and the group that had worked on the statement. In terms of procedure, she asked whether it was envisioned that the central committee would meet again, after the February meeting, before the assembly, either electronically or in-person. If another meeting was on the table, then comments could be forwarded back from the executive and central committee members to the drafting group for further work on the document and then presented at a subsequent central committee meeting. If not, then a decision should be made on how a final version for the assembly was approved by governance. The statement was so dense and important. She was not comfortable with executive committee forwarding the statement in its present form to the central committee for approval.

Dr Abuom said that the feeling of LCC was that since the executive committee had not had the chance to consider the document, it should not be presented to the central committee for approval at this time. The imbalance in confessional voices in the drafting group's work merited further work and the addition of a few more members.

She added that she thought another central committee meeting would be needed to complete the work.

Mr Georges Lemopoulos, consensus consultant, offered a procedural proposal. The executive could receive with appreciation the draft statement. It could express regret that, because of the overall situation, the document came to the governance with a delay. The executive committee could then invite the central committee members to express their comments and suggestions not only during the meeting, but also following the meeting giving them a fixed amount of time to consider the text. The document could then be referred back to the group, enriched by a few more people, with the revised statement referred to the executive committee meeting. If there was another central committee meeting, then the document could be presented there. He added that buzz groups could be used during the discussion in the central committee meeting.

Dr Abuom thanked Dr Kolovopoulou for her presentation and leadership in the drafting group.

Later in the meeting, the recommendations

1. *The executive committee **received** with appreciation the draft unity statement prepared by the unity statement drafting group.*

2. *The executive committee **invites** and **encourages** the central committee to make comments and suggestions to the draft during this meeting and to send further comments to the central committee discussion portal by 28 February.*

3. *The executive committee **proposes** that the suggestions made by the central committee be incorporated by the unity statement drafting group with the possibility of the leadership of the central committee to invite additional persons; and that a revised draft unity statement for consideration by the assembly be reviewed by the next executive committee for action (to forward to the assembly).*

were approved by consensus.

## 6. Membership Matters (GEN PRC 02)

Mr Chial introduced the central committee document on membership matters. The applications of the Faith Apostolic Mission South Africa and The First Africa Mission (Nigeria) as member churches were received at the central committee meeting in June 2021. The proposal was for these churches to become members at the central committee meeting starting the following day. The proposal also included the recommendation to recognize the continued membership of the Anglican Province of Alexandria. These proposals were made by the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration. Bishop Simo Peura (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland) as co-moderator of the PCCC would present these matters to the central committee.

Ms Evans asked whether the churches had been visited in-person. Mr Chial responded that the churches had been visited before the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic came into force. Contact had continued with the churches despite the pandemic and they were still interested in becoming members of the WCC. The general secretary could report that there had been no objections to the new membership.

Later in the meeting, the recommendations

1. *Together with the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration, the executive committee recommends that the central committee **receive** The First Africa Mission Church (Nigeria) as a member church of the World Council of Churches (Rule I.5); and **invite** the church to nominate delegates to the assembly.*

2. *Together with the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration, the executive committee recommends that the central committee **receive** the Faith Apostolic Mission of South Africa as member church of the World Council of Churches (Rule I.5); and **invite** the church to nominate delegates to the assembly.*

3. *Together with the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration, the executive committee recommends that the central committee* ***recognize*** *the continued membership of the Anglican Province of Alexandria; and* ***invite*** *the church to nominate delegates to the assembly.*

were approved by consensus.

## 7. Conversations on the Pilgrim Way: … Addendum (GEN PRO 03.2)

Mr Chial said that the document *Conversations on the Pilgrim Way: Invitation to Journey Together on Matters of Human Sexuality – A Resource for Reflection and Action* (GEN PRO 03.1) would be presented to the central committee for information.

Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri continued saying that the addendum was an update of the document that had been presented to the executive committee in November 2019. The document *Conversations on the Pilgrim Way* arose from a recommendation of the Busan assembly. The assembly recognized that questions of gender and human sexuality were challenging for churches but maintained that these challenges could best be faced by churches together as an aspect of their common pilgrimage. The original document was completed in September 2019 and was subsequently translated into the WCC working languages in anticipation of the central committee meeting scheduled for March 2020 and for sharing with the churches. At this point the reference group on human sexuality had fulfilled its mandate to produce a resource for the churches.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this had been delayed till the present. This delay made the document incomplete as it did not cover later developments in different churches in various directions. For this reason the reference group on human sexuality asked to work further to produce the addendum presented to the executive committee at this meeting. The LCC agreed. It highlighted significant and relevant reports, published by churches, Christian world communions, formal and informal groups of theologians, bodies associated with the United Nations, the faith and order commission and other WCC programmes. There had also been developments regarding matters of human sexuality in society. The intention was to include this new material into the appropriate sections of the larger resource document. She said that the executive committee was requested to receive the addendum as a resource document for member churches and ecumenical partners interested in dialogue on issues of sexuality and for possible transmission, for information, to the central committee at one of its next meetings.

Dr Abuom opened the floor for discussion. Archpriest Mikhail Goundiaev (Russian Orthodox Church [Moscow Patriarchate]) felt that the previous document presented was balanced. He reminded the group that when the process began, the issue was meant to be addressed in all its wideness, not only focusing on LGBT related issues, but also including theological thinking about family, etc. He felt that the addendum was centred on LGBT agenda and was not in line with the agenda of the WCC. If this addendum would be published to the churches, there would be some very negative reaction to the way of thinking. He also objected to the methodology of gathering opinions from organizations which were not necessarily linked to a church. Even as a resource document it was not acceptable as it moved away from looking at questions of human sexuality as a whole to an LGBT agenda. He asked the executive

committee if presenting this addendum would not risk the integrity of the WCC with such an approach.

Ms Evans asked whether future iterations of this document might be envisaged to remain current and about the process for continuing the updates.

Dr Phiri thanked the members for their comments. She made the clarification that the addendum, once received, would not stand on its own, but rather be incorporated into the larger document. This would then show a more balanced picture in the overall text. The addendum, as it was presented at this time, reflected the recent developments rather than the whole picture as represented in the larger text. She indicated that the addendum was added because of the delay in meeting imposed on the WCC by the pandemic. It was meant to fill the gaps since 2019 for presentation to the central committee. Further updates were not foreseen after this upcoming central committee meeting. If the assembly in Karlsruhe decided to have another reference group, they would not produce an addendum but rather a new document.

Ms Glynn-Mackoul recalled that the original work went through a number of versions with extremely careful attention to both the importance of the issue at hand, and the self-understanding of the member churches engaged in the work. She expressed concern that the addendum had not yet matured in the same way. For instance, she was surprised to see the inclusion of the Rainbow Index of churches in Europe. Some of the text might be seen as advocacy work and might not be received well by her own church.

H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian (Armenian Apostolic Church [Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin]) said that any document presented to the central committee should be taken very seriously, with clear language and avoiding any possible offence to a member church. Some of the churches were conservative, not only from the Orthodox family, but many in Africa and Asia, as well. When speaking on LGBT issues, for instance, we might not only be putting our churches in difficulty but also those representatives of churches which call themselves conservative. One the one hand representatives of member churches would come to WCC meetings to be part of the fellowship, and on the other hand, conservative Christians were going to grill them for some of the language they he had accepted in WCC documents. For this reason, documents needed to be very clear and balanced.

H.E. Metropolitan Nifon asked about possibilities of improving the text before incorporating it into the larger document, to avoid trouble and to promote understanding and unity. Dr Phiri clarified that the addendum was not meant to go to the meeting of the central committee starting the following day. She said that if the executive committee was not satisfied with the current draft, it could be reworked by the reference group on human sexuality and brought back to the next meeting of the executive committee. No incorporation would take place until both documents had been received. H.E. Metropolitan Nifon thanked the deputy general secretary and welcomed the idea of more work and reflection on the document.

Rev. Karin van den Broeke remarked that taking this addendum off of the central committee agenda the following days, may also cause challenges. There are some central committee members who are eager to read this and accept the addendum. She wondered if the

objections were a result of the language or of the topic itself. She affirmed that the topic of LGBTI was very sensitive but it did belong in our common duty to discuss issues of human sexuality. She was not convinced that withdrawing this document really solved the problem. She added her appreciation for the WCC's documents on moral discernment.

H.E. Metropolitan Nifon regretted that the committee was not meeting in-person for this discussion as that would allow more dialogue and more time to come to a common mind. For such sensitive matters, it was difficult to discuss all the nuances in an online meeting. He hoped that the pandemic would soon conclude so that the committee could resume its in-person meetings.

Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland) felt that it would be a good idea to work further on the text. However, she agreed with Rev. van den Broeke that objections to the text was not just about language but about about issues addressed. If a decision to work further on the document was taken, it had to be clear where the language was not acceptable. The issue had to be addressed in a way which did not hurt people but at the same time, it was important to be honest and admit that there was an issue to be addressed. She felt that it would not be possible to avoid this discussion, despite the sensitivities.

The moderator confirmed that the larger, substantive document was still to be presented to the central committee at the meeting on the following days. She did not see the harm in taking the time to work further on the addendum before presenting it.

Bishop Peura agreed that more time to work on the text was needed, especially if the work was to be done primarily online.

Ms Glynn-Mackoul appreciated the observation that removing the addendum from the central committee agenda at this time was a challenge. Communicating that the executive committee thought that more work should be done on the document might be helpful. It was clear that the discussion could not be avoided especially as we moved to the assembly where there was an ecumenical conversation on human sexuality. She felt that the addendum contained some very valuable new information but that such information must be presented in a careful way which spoke from the voices of the churches rather than from an advocacy group. She suggested presenting it to the central committee at the meeting in the coming day, but carefully managing the presentation.

Dr Abuom agreed and said that the presentation had to be done in a way that acknowledged the original document as well as the need to address recent developments. However the addendum needed more refinement.

Ms Evans clarified that the addendum was no longer on the central committee document list. For this reason, in the introduction to the larger document (GEN PRO 03.1), it could be communicated that further work would be done on the addendum. This meant that the executive committee was not actually pulling the document out of the central committee agenda.

The recommendations
*The executive committee*

1. ***asks** the reference group on human sexuality to carry out further work on the addendum, taking into consideration the comments made by the executive committee; and*
2. ***asks** that a revised version be presented to the next meeting of the executive committee*

were approved by consensus.

The moderator thanked Dr Phiri for her work with the reference group on human sexuality and the executive committee for their engaged participation in the session.

## 8. Assembly Related Nominations (EC 02)

Dr Agnes Abuom moderated the session and the central committee draft document on Assembly Related Nominations was presented to the executive committee.

***A. Assembly Committee Leadership***

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios said that the document had been presented to the LCC, after which some revisions were made. Six assembly committees were presented to work on assembly business:

- Finance Committee – 15 members
- Nominations Committee – 25 members
- Message Committee – 15 members
- Policy Reference Committee – 25 members
- Programme Guidelines Committee – 25 members
- Public Issues Committee – 25 members

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios briefly described the mandates of the committees. It was noted that the delegates who were not assigned to assembly committees could actively participate in the home groups, ecumenical conversations, and other parts of the programme.

The proposed leadership – moderator and rapporteur – for each committee was presented. Capacity as well as fair and adequate representation were taken into account in the proposals. H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios remarked that the leadership of these committees could not be fully representative of the fellowship. These names should be seen along with the other proposal for leadership of the ecumenical conversations, and speakers in thematic plenaries. Some changes were proposed related to continuity and to the experience of the persons named as well as multiple responsibilities. The members were asked to give the names more thought and send in their proposals for changes.

H.E. Archbishop Vicken expressed disappointment at the low number of names from the Oriental Orthodox family among the proposals.

Ms Glynn-Mackoul informed the committee that she would not be continuing in WCC governance after the next assembly. Several members expressed sadness at this news and thanked her for her leadership, expertise and wisdom in the central and executive committees as well as other groups. Her experience was significant and highly appreciated by

the whole central committee. The proposal to ask her to chair the assembly nominations committee was warmly welcomed by the executive committee.

Later in the session a revised slate was agreed:

**Finance Committee**
- Moderator – H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian (Armenian Apostolic Church Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin)
- Rapporteur – Rev. Merlyn Hyde-Riley (Jamaica Baptist Union)

**Nominations Committee**
- Moderator – Ms Anne Glynn-Mackoul (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East)
- Rapporteur – Bishop Rex R.B. Reyes (Episcopal Church in the Philippines)

**Message Committee**
- Moderator – Rt. Rev. Dr Gregory Cameron (Church in Wales)
- Rapporteur – Rev. Lucy Waweru (Presbyterian Church of East Africa)

**Policy Reference Committee**
- Moderator – Metropolitan Dr Vasilios of Constantia (Church of Cyprus)
- Rapporteur – Rev. Dr Ge Wen (China Christian Council)

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**Programme Guidelines Committee**
- Moderator – Rev. Karin van den Broeke (Protestant Church in the Netherlands)
- Rapporteur – Rev. Dr Karen Georgia Thompson (United Church of Christ, USA)

**Public Issues Committee**
- Moderator – Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste (Romanian Orthodox Church)
- Rapporteur – Dr Nora Bayrakdarian-Kabakian (Armenian Apostolic Church Holy See of Cilicia)

*The executive committee agreed by consensus to forward these proposals to the central committee for action.*

***B. Consensus Facilitation Team***

The Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration and the Assembly Planning Committee recommended that the central committee nominate a consensus facilitation team to serve the assembly.

The mandate of the team included advising delegates and leadership on both the procedures and ethos of WCC consensus decision-making during the assembly. The proposal for a team was meant to strengthen the role, resource the assembly and as an opportunity for the formation a younger generation. Ms Glynn-Mackoul asked that her name be removed in favour of a younger participant. She offered to be available for advising the team as necessary during the assembly. A change was proposed and the revised slate was agreed:

The team proposed includes:

- Mr Juan Carlos Chavez Quispe (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bolivia) – Bossey Graduate, member of the Ecumenical Indigenous Persons Network. Around 30 years old.
- Ms Emily Evans (Uniting Church in Australia) – outgoing member of the executive and central committees.
- Mrs Celina Falk (Church of Sweden) – delegate, outgoing member of the central committee, observer/advisor to the working group on constitution and rules.
- Mr Georges Lemopoulos (Ecumenical Patriarchate) – currently serving as WCC consensus consultant.

*The executive committee agreed by consensus to forward these proposals to the central committee for action.*

***C. Draft Ecumenical Conversations Leadership Profile***

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios said there were 23 ecumenical conversations, each with a moderator and rapporteur, and went over the names proposed.

Dr Abuom invited the executive committee to make proposals before the central committee meeting.

*The executive committee agreed by consensus to forward the draft proposals to the central committee for action.*

***D. Thematic Plenary Speaker Profiles (EC 03)***

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios reminded the committee that there were five thematic plenaries for all participants during the assembly. He went over each of the plenary descriptions and proposed leadership.

1. The purpose of God's love in Christ for the whole creation – reconciliation and unity; Thursday, 1 September 2022 (Day of Creation); biblical anchor texts: Col 1:19 f. (Eph 1:10) and Mt 9:35 f.

2. Europe Plenary; Friday, 2 September 2022; biblical anchor text: Luke 10 (Good Samaritan)

3. Affirming the wholeness of life; Monday, 5 September 2022; biblical anchor text: John 9:1-12

4. Affirming justice and human dignity; Tuesday, 6 September 2022; biblical anchor text: Matthew 15:21-28

5. Christian unity and the churches' common witness; Wednesday, 7 September 2022; biblical anchor text: Matthew 20:20-28

Ms Glynn-Mackoul suggested that for first thematic plenary where delegates and representatives from the Middle East were mentioned, this would be a good opportunity to hear from H.B. Patriarch John X from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the

East. H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios said that this idea had come up. The patriarch was the head of the delegation of his church. There was the sensitivity that if one primate was given voice in the assembly, then many others would want to have a role. The fact that Patriarch John was a WCC president provided a good criterion for his specific involvement in the assembly plenaries.

Bishop Bosse-Huber said that the German minister of foreign affairs, Ms Annalena Baerbock, was a very interesting young woman and member of the Green Party. This meant that if she was not invited to participate in the third thematic plenary, she could be a resource person for climate justice and other issues. She added that Ms Anna-Nicole Heinrich, new president of EKD, was also a younger woman and a wonderful representative of the EKD. Her predecessor, Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, was instrumental in organizing the invitation to Germany for the assembly. She asked that whichever person was not invited to participate in this plenary, be asked to contribute to the panel on the thematic plenary on Europe.

H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios affirmed that Bishop Dr Bedford-Strohm was a great ecumenical figure and that he should be asked to play a role in the assembly. He suggested that the new president of the EKD be given a bit of time before having an important role in the assembly. He suggested that she address a message to the assembly as the leader of the host churches.

Rev. Dr Hyunju Bae (Presbyterian Church of Korea) asked that Ms Baerbock be given a role to contribute to the assembly through one of the plenaries. The EKD had taken a courageous step in naming her president and giving her a profile would be a good example to other Protestant churches at the assembly. It was proposed that she co-moderate the Europe Plenary with Archbishop Emeritus Dr Anders Wejryd. This responsibility could be in addition to giving a message to the assembly from the German host churches.

H.E. Metropolitan Nifon proposed that H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios be invited to speak in the last thematic plenary on Christian unity as a strong Orthodox voice is needed. He reminded the committee that H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios had served as faith and order staff, moderator of the faith and order commission and of the assembly planning committee.

As a plenary speaker on climate change, H.E. Metropolitan Serafim suggested Ms Patricia Espinosa, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to speak about the importance of implementing the Paris Agreement.

H.E. Archbishop Vicken thanked those who had prepared the proposals with recognition of how difficult a task it was to ensure that the entire fellowship is properly represented in the assembly leadership. He felt that more work needed to be done by staff and the LCC on all the proposals for assembly leadership and thematic plenary speakers before presentation to the central committee to ensure fair and adequate representation. He was encouraged to send proposals to the secretariat for improvement of the documents.

*The executive committee <u>agreed by consensus</u> to forward the draft proposals to the central committee for action.*

Later in the meeting, the recommendation
*The executive committee asks the central committee to **receive**, **discuss** and **approve** the proposed leadership of the assembly committees, consensus facilitation team, ecumenical conversation leadership and proposed plenary speakers.*
was approved by consensus.

H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin) decided to stand aside for this decision and asked that it be noted in the minutes of the meeting.

## 9. Report of the Advisory Group, programme to overcome racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia (EC 04)

The report was presented to the executive committee for a first reading, for information. Prof. Dr Isabel Phiri, deputy general secretary, said that the group had discussed the manifestations of racism and xenophobia in different regions. The consultation which took place in December 2021, sought to outline what the WCC could do to overcome racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia. The group developed ten recommendations. The document would be presented again to the executive committee at a subsequent meeting for a more detailed discussion. It was also the intention to use this document as a background document for the ecumenical conversation 16 *Together Towards Racial Justice* at the assembly.

The moderator thanked her for the work which had now started and looked forward to a more substantive discussion at the next meeting. The executive committee received the document with appreciation.

## 10. Report of the Executive Committee (GEN 02)

The presentation prepared for the central committee on the report of the executive committee was shown (video projection) to the committee. Bishop Mary Anne Swenson presented the report and said that she would add some information on this current meeting with the central committee following this video.

Mr Chial said that some recommendations had been drafted on the issues that were meant to come forward to the central committee from this executive committee meeting. He shared the decisions on:
- The draft unity statement;
- Membership matters;
- Proposed assembly leadership and plenary speakers.

Bishop Swenson was asked to share these decisions with the central committee the following day. The decisions on assembly speakers and membership matters would also be shared with Bishop Sally Dyck, moderator of the policy reference committee, and Bishop Simo Peura, moderator of the governance and nominations committee, respectively.

With regard to the work of the governance and nominations committee, Ms Glynn-Mackoul asked that the executive committee members be prepared for the discussion on the report of the working group on constitution and rules. In particular, the difference of opinion between the executive committee and the working group on term limits for executive committee should be noted and discussed.

In response to a question about the replacements on the permanent committee, the governance and nominations committee would be asked to propose names to the central committee.

*The executive committee approved by consensus the report of the executive committee.*

## 11. Closing Remarks and Prayer

Dr Agnes Abuom expressed her gratitude to the executive committee members for their time and commitment. She thanked the acting general secretary and the staff for preparing this executive committee meeting.

During the central committee meeting in the coming days, the issue of the election process might be challenging but, as discussed in the LCC, the path forward was to follow the rules and the procedures in the supplement to the rules. This might mean scheduling another central committee meeting before the assembly. The LCC confirmed that an election could only be held during an in-person meeting of the central committee, as was stated in the rules.

She wished the group God's blessing for the busy days ahead in the central committee meeting and thanked all the members for offering leadership in other capacities, both in the central committee and for the assembly.

She expressed her hope that God's will would be done during the upcoming central committee and that through the proceedings God's name would be exalted. She hoped that the character of the WCC as churches with people of faith would be evident in the style of the work done.

Bishop Mary Anne Swenson offered a prayer to close the meeting.

## APPENDIX – Participants List

**Leadership**
Dr Agnes ABUOM, Anglican Church of Kenya
Bishop Mary Ann SWENSON, United Methodist Church
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr GENNADIOS OF SASSIMA, Ecumenical Patriarchate
Fr Prof. Dr Ioan SAUCA, Acting General Secretary

**Members**
Rev. Dr Festus Ambe ASANA, Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken AYKAZIAN, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin)
Rev. Dr Samson Olasupo Adeniyi AYOKUNLE, Nigerian Baptist Convention
Rev. Dr Hyunju BAE, Presbyterian Church of Korea
Bishop Petra BOSSE-HUBER, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland
Ms Emily Jane EVANS, Uniting Church in Australia
Ms Anne GLYNN-MACKOUL, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East
Archpriest Mikhail GOUNDIAEV, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
Rev. Karl JOHNSON, Jamaica Baptist Union
H.E. Metropolitan Serafim KYKOTIS, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa
Rev. Dr Manhong LIN, China Christian Council
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr NIFON OF TARGOVISTE, Romanian Orthodox Church
Bishop Simo PEURA, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
Rev. Karin VAN DEN BROEKE, Protestant Church in the Netherlands

**Apologies**
Rev. Cora Luisa ANTONIO MATAMOROS, Iglesia Morava en Nicaragua
H.E. Dr Archbishop Abune AREGAWI, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
Rev. Martina Viktorie KOPECKÁ, Czechoslovak Hussite Church
Rev. Everdith Yaritza LANDRAU, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Taaroanui MARAEA, Église protestante Maohi
H.E. Metropolitan Zachariah Mar NICHOLOVOS, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
Bishop Rex R. B. REYES, Jr., Episcopal Church in the Philippines
Bishop John F. WHITE, African Methodist Episcopal Church

**Guests**
Prof. Dr Marina Kolovopoulou, Chruch of Greece

**Staff Leadership Group**

| | |
|---|---|
| Mr Doug Chial | Director, General Secretariat |
| Ms Elaine Dykes | Director, Finance |
| Ms Marianne Ejdersten | Director, Communication |
| Rev. Prof. Dr Odair Mateus | Deputy General Secretary |
| Prof. Dr Isabel Phiri | Deputy General Secretary |
| Fr Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca | Acting General Secretary |

**Staff**

| | |
|---|---|
| Ms Charlotte Belot | Assembly Administrator |
| Ms Diana Chabloz | Assistant to the General Secretary |
| Ms Catherine Christ-Taha | Coordinator, Conference Office and Governing Bodies |
| Mr Marc-Henri Heiniger | Assembly Logistics Coordinator |
| Rev. Dr Risto Jukka | Director, Commission on World Mission and Evangelism |
| Mr Ivars Kupcis | Communications Officer |
| Dr Manoj Kurian | EAA Coordinator and HIV Campaign Coordinator |
| Mr Georges Lemopoulos | Governance Consultant |
| Dr Mwai Makoka | Programme Executive, Health and Healing |
| Ms Clémence Mathiaud | Membership Income Coordinator, IMD/PMER |
| Mr Peter Prove | Director, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs |
| Dr Marcelo Schneider | Communications Officer |
| Rev. Dr Abraham Wilar Silo | Programme Executive, Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation |
| Rev. Dr Benjamin Simon | Programme Executive, Church and Ecumenical Relations |
| Ms Karina Vartanova | Finance Manager |
| Rev. Nathan Day Wilson | IMD/PMER Manager |